PREVIOUSLY

There are some places you just don't mess with. Wakanda is one of them. Since the dawn of time, that African warrior nation has been sending would-be conquerors home in body bags. While the rest of Africa got carved up like a Christmas turkey by the rest of the world, Wakanda's cultural evolution has gone unchecked for centuries, unfettered by the yoke of colonization. The result: A hi-tech, resource-rich, ecologically-sound paradise that makes the rest of the world seem primitive by comparison.

Ruling over all this is the Black Panther.

The Black Panther is more than just the embodiment of a warrior cult that's served as Wakanda's religious, political and military head since its inception. The Black Panther is the embodiment of the ideals of a people. Anyone who'd dare to make a move on Wakanda must go through him.

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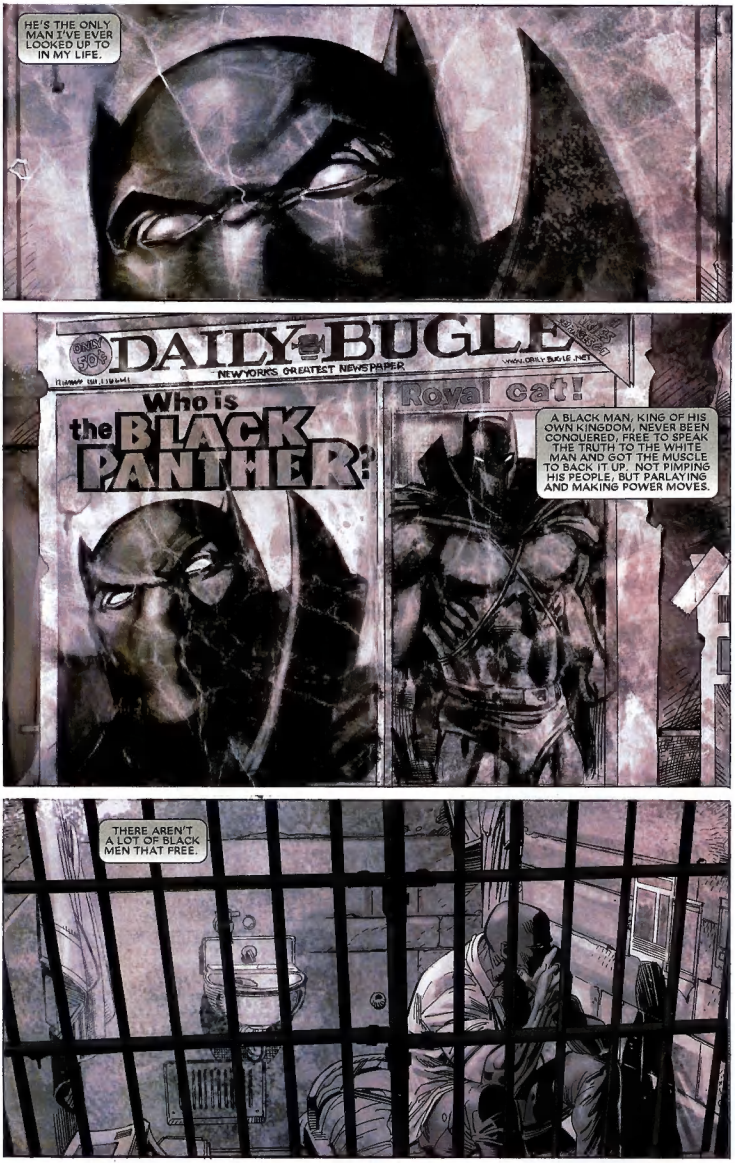
HE'S THE ONLY MAN I'VE EVER LOOKED UP TO IN MY LIFE.
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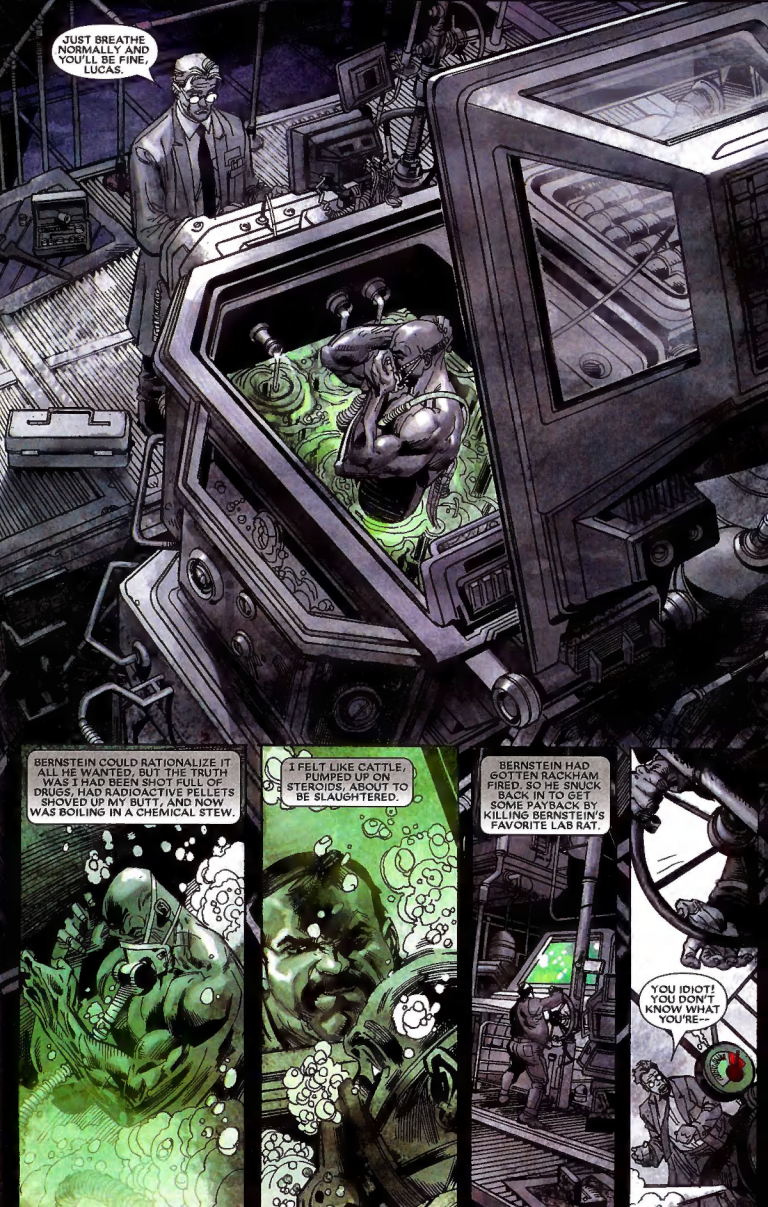
Who is the BLACK PANTHER?
Royal cat!
A BLACK MAN, KING OF HIS OWN KINGDOM, NEVER BEEN CONQUERED, FREE TO SPEAK THE TRUTH TO THE WHITE MAN AND GOT THE MUSCLE TO BACK IT UP. NOT PIMPING HIS PEOPLE, BUT PARLAYING AND MAKING POWER MOVES.
THERE AREN'T A LOT OF BLACK MEN THAT FREE.

THAT YOUR BOYFRIEND, LUCAS? NO WONDER YOU DON'T MESS WITH THE PRISON-PUNKS. YOU'VE GOT A CRUSH ON A MAN IN TIGHTS.
RACKRACK!
WHUP
UNF!
YOU...ARE... NEVAH...GETTING OUT OF THE HOLE THIS TIME, BOY!
YOU CAN BE AS FREE AS YOU WANT TO BE-- IF YOU'RE WILLING TO PAY THE PRICE.

HOW LONG HAS HE BEEN IN THERE?
LUCAS? WE LOST TRACK.
DOESN'T LOOK LIKE YOU BROKE HIM YET.
AH...LUCAS, IS IT? MY NAME IS DR. NOAH BERNSTEIN. YOU'VE BEEN "VOLUNTEERED" FOR A MEDICAL EXPERIMENT.
I KNOW YOU'RE SMART ENOUGH TO KNOW THAT ANY EXPERIMENT THAT USES PRISONERS THAT'VE BEEN LOCKED AWAY FOR LIFE IS PROBABLY NOT VERY SAFE.
ALL I CAN TELL YOU IS THAT I AM *NOT* A BUTCHER. IF I THOUGHT YOU WERE SIGNIFICANTLY AT RISK, I WOULDN'T DO IT. YOU PROBABLY DON'T BELIEVE ME, BUT CONSIDERING I DON'T HAVE TO PROMISE ANYTHING TO YOU, THAT SHOULD GIVE YOU SOME COMFORT.


JUST BREATHE NORMALLY AND YOU'LL BE FINE, LUCAS.
BERNSTEIN COULD RATIONALIZE IT ALL HE WANTED, BUT THE TRUTH WAS I HAD BEEN SHOT FULL OF DRUGS, HAD RADIOACTIVE PELLETS SHOVED UP MY BUTT, AND NOW WAS BOILING IN A CHEMICAL STEW.
I FELT LIKE CATTLE, PUMPED UP ON STEROIDS, ABOUT TO BE SLAUGHTERED.
BERNSTEIN HAD GOTTEN RACKHAM FIRED, SO HE SNUCK BACK IN TO GET SOME PAYBACK BY KILLING BERNSTEIN'S FAVORITE LAB RAT.
YOU IDIOT! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE--

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I HAD TO GET OUT OF THERE BEFORE THE RESCUE TEAMS ARRIVED. IF I COULD FIND A WAY OUT. THEY WOULD JUST THINK I GOT BLOWN TO FINE MIST IN THE EXPLOSION.
THERE WAS ONLY ONE WAY OUT.
THROUGH THE WALL.
KRAK!
CRACKK!

I COULD HAVE GONE BACK TO THE TRIFE LIFE, BUT I FIGURED I WAS A NEW MAN, TIME FOR A NEW LIFE.
NAILS
NOW I'M A *HERO FOR HIRE*. HIGH-PRICED MUSCLE FOR SALE. I'VE HAD SOME PRETTY HIGH-END CLIENTS: MATT MURDOCK, THE FANTASTIC FOUR. I EVEN HAVE AVENGERS STATUS.
OPEN
BUT YOU STILL NEED THOSE BREAD-AND-BUTTER JOBS. WHICH IS WHY I'M IN THE BACK OF THE LIMO WITH THE BIGGEST RAPPER IN THE WORLD RIGHT NOW.
HE HAD A HALF DOZEN GUYS ON HIS SO-CALLED "SECURITY TEAM" ALREADY, BUT HE STILL WASN'T FEELING VERY SECURE.
SEEING HIS CREW OF L'S, I *SEE* WHY HE FELT NAKED. THERE WERE HIS KNUCKLEHEAD BOYS FROM AROUND THE WAY, WHO MADE MORE TROUBLE THAN THEY FIXED; AND A COUPLE OF OFF DUTY COPS WHO WERE IN IT FOR THE MONEY AND THE CHICKENHEADS.

HE WAS DATING A BIG HOLLYWOOD ACTRESS. THEY DESERVED EACH OTHER.
THEY WANTED TO GO CLUBBING, WHICH WASN'T THE *SAFEST* MOVE, BUT THEY HAD TO GO OUT TO BE SEEN, GET IN THE PAPERS, EVEN THOUGH THEY WEREN'T *OFFICIALLY* A COUPLE.
WHEN *THIS COUPLE* WALKS INTO A CLUB, THERE'S NOTHING HOTTER THAN THEM. NOBODY IS SEXIER, RICHER, AND COOLER THAN THEY ARE. EXCEPT TONIGHT.
TONIGHT, THE *BLACK PANTHER* SHOWED UP AT THE CLUB.

MY CLIENT DIDN'T EVEN KNOW WHO THE PANTHER WAS. BUT HIS DATE DID.
YOU KNOW, HE'S SUPPOSED TO BE ONE OF THE *WEALTHIEST* BLACK MEN IN THE WORLD, RIGHT?
WEALTHIEST PERIOD.
THAT WAS OUT OF LINE, BUT I HAD TO SET IT STRAIGHT.
WHATEVER. THEM AFRICANS NEED TO SPEND A LITTLE OF THAT CHEESE ON SOME SOAP FOR THEY ASHY BUTTS. SLAVERY AIN'T SO BAD CONSIDERIN' WE GOT PROPER HYGIENE SKILLS OUT OF IT.
HAHAHAHAHAHA! POOKIE, YOU ARE *CRAZY!*
WHAT IS HE DOIN' UP IN THE CLUB ANYWAY?
I HAVE NO IDEA WHY THE BLACK PANTHER WOULD BE HERE, BUT MY CLIENT'S DATE HAD A LOT OF OPINIONS.

SHE DIDN'T MENTION THE SPEECH HE GAVE TO THE UN THIS AFTERNOON. SHE ONLY READS A NEWSPAPER FOR HER HOROSCOPE.
THE ATTEMPTED INVASION OF WAKANDA WAS AN INTERNATIONAL EFFORT. ALL ENEMY COMBATANTS WILL ■ QUESTIONED BY WAKANDAN SECURITY FORCES UNTIL WE KNOW THE EXTENT OF THE CONSPIRACY AGAINST OUR SOVEREIGNTY. ALL REQUESTS FOR EXTRADITION--FROM THE PENTAGON TO VATICAN CITY--ARE DENIED.
NO, MY CLIENT'S DATE WAS REFERRING TO AN INCIDENT THAT HAD HAPPENED THE NIGHT BEFORE IN WASHINGTON, D.C. IT WAS A HIGHLY CONTROVERSIAL DEBATE...AND SHE'S NOT REFERRING TO THE CONVERSATION THAT HAPPENED BETWEEN THE PANTHER AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE.
OUR FORCES WERE SENT ■ TO SUPPORT YOUR REGIME--
DID I ASK FOR HELP? I DON'T THINK SO.
NO, SHE WAS TUNED INTO THE RUMOR BEHIND THE "REAL" REASON FOR THE PANTHER'S U.S. TOUR. SURE, HE WAS MEETING WITH WORLD POWERS ABOUT THE ATTEMPTED INVASION OF WAKANDA, BUT THAT WAS JUST AN EXCUSE FOR HIS REAL MISSION:
TO FIND A WIFE.
APPARENTLY, AFTER TAKING THE THRONE AND KILLING THE MAN WHO MURDERED HIS FATHER, HIS NEXT JOB WAS TO FIND A WIFE AND PRODUCE AN HEIR. OR TWO.

BEFORE YOU RUN OFF AND DECLARE WAR ON HALF THE WORLD, I'M JUST HERE TO REMIND YOU -- PRIMARY AMONG YOUR DUTIES AS KING IS TO SELECT A MATE FOR YOURSELF.
OH, MOTHER...
THIS IS NOT YOUR MAMA NAGGING YOU. THIS IS THE QUEEN MOTHER OF WAKANDA REMINDING THE KING OF HIS RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE REALM.
THE JOB IS ONLY HALF DONE, MOTHER. I MADE A PROMISE THAT EVERYONE RESPONSIBLE FOR FATHER'S DEATH WILL--
THE BEST WAY TO HONOR YOUR FATHER IS TO PROTECT THE ROYAL BLOODLINE.
...I-I TAKE ALL OF MY RESPONSIBILITIES VERY SERIOUSLY...BUT DROPPING EVERYTHING TO PICK A WIFE RIGHT NOW IS JUST....
...EASY. YOU'VE DATED A NUMBER OF SPECTACULAR WOMEN OVER THE YEARS. I CAN'T BELIEVE MY SON IS PICKIER THAN I AM.
RIGHT NOW, YOU'RE JUST OBSESSED WITH REVENGE. HAVING A FAMILY WILL GIVE YOU BALANCE...YOU'LL BE A BETTER LEADER, AND YOU'LL MAKE YOUR MOTHER HAPPY.
CAN'T YOU JUST CLONE A GRANDSON FROM A SKIN SAMPLE? DIDN'T YOU SAVE THE CLIPPINGS FROM MY FIRST HAIRCUT?
DON'T JOKE! FIND A SUITABLE MOTHER FOR YOUR CHILDREN IN CASE OF YOUR DEATH. MY DAYS OF CHANGING DIAPERS ARE OVER.
DID YOU CHANGE MY DIAPERS? I THOUGHT THAT WAS THE NANNY'S JOB.
DON'T GET FRESH. BUT SPEAKING OF SERVANTS...ARE YOU ATTRACTED TO EITHER OF YOUR DORA MILAJE? BEAUTIFUL FEMALE WARRIORS DEDICATED TO YOUR SERVICE... THEY ARE NATURAL CANDIDATES.
MARRYING YOUR BODYGUARDS ALWAYS STRUCK ME AS A MISTAKE...TURNS AN ASSET INTO A LIABILITY.
LIFE IS COMPLICATED. CHOOSE WHOM YOU WILL. THEY DON'T EVEN HAVE TO BE WAKANDAN.
BUT CHOOSE SOON.

WHAT'S HE DOING IN *AMERICA* LOOKING FOR A WIFE? HE NEEDS TO FIND A HALF DOZEN MFOOFOO'S OUT IN THE BUSH SOMEWHERE AND ROTATE 'EM IN A HAREM.
YOU MEAN LIKE HOW *YOU* DO IT, BIG DADDY?
MO' WOMEN, MO' PROBLEMS. THESE YOUNG BOYS WILL LEARN THAT EVENTUALLY. PLUS, IF YOU WANT TO BE REAL GANGSTER ABOUT IT, A FAMILY GETS YOUR MIND RIGHT. LIKE MICHAEL CORLEONE IN "THE GODFATHER." FIRST THING HE DID WHEN HE GOT MADE CAPO WAS TO FIND KAY AND CONVINCE HER TO COME BACK TO HIM.
THAT'S WHY THE PANTHER WAS IN D.C. TO FIND HIS KAY.
ORPHE
MONICA LYNNE, A NEO-SOUL SINGER OUT OF PHILLY. THEY DATED WHILE HE WAS LEARNING THE DIPLOMATIC GAME IN WASHINGTON. HE WAS OUT OF COLLEGE AND SHE ALREADY HAD A FOLLOWING.
NOW HE'S A KING AND SHE'S A STAR. I GIVE HER CREDIT--SHE MAKES REAL GROWN FOLKS MUSIC. I APPRECIATE HER STUFF AND IT GIVES THE KIDS SOMETHING DECENT TO LISTEN TO.
OH MY GOD, MY HAIRDRESSER'S BOYFRIEND WAS THERE AND *HEARD* THE WHOLE THING.
SO THE PANTHER MEETS HER BACKSTAGE AFTER THE SHOW. YOU'D *THINK* THAT IF AN AFRICAN KING THAT YOU WERE DATING BACK IN THE DAY BACK WHEN YOU DIDN'T EVEN KNOW HE WAS A KING COMES TO ASK YOU TO GET MARRIED, YOU'D JUMP FOR JOY, RIGHT? I MEAN, THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED IN "COMING TO AMERICA," RIGHT?

"BUT SHE WASN'T HAVING IT. SHE HAD SPENT ALL THIS TIME GETTING OVER HIM, NOW SHE'S BLOWN UP AND HE'S GOING TO MESS HER HEAD UP AGAIN?"
I DIDN'T KNOW A MARRIAGE PROPOSAL WAS A BURDEN.
NO, THAT'S NOT IT. I'M NOT TRYING TO BE DISRESPECTFUL OR UNGRATEFUL.
BUT WHILE I WAS DATING YOU, I WAS KIDNAPPED TWICE, THERE WERE MURDER ATTEMPTS ON YOUR LIFE THAT I HAPPENED TO BE CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE OF--
--AND YOU'RE FINE. I WILL ALWAYS PROTECT YOU.
IF I WAS THE KIND OF GIRL WHO DIDN'T MIND FLIRTING WITH DANGER, I WOULD HAVE DATED A DRUG DEALER IN 10TH GRADE. I DIDN'T PASS UP A RIDE TO SCHOOL IN A NEW BENZ TO END UP GETTING KILLED BY MONGO THE ALBINO APE MAN!
HIS NAME WAS--
WHATEVER! I AM NOT RAISING KIDS IN THAT KIND OF ENVIRONMENT!
BESIDES, YOUR MOTHER DOESN'T LIKE ME.
THAT IS *NOT* TRUE.
"OH, [redacted] WAS PERFECTLY POLITE. BUT SHE MADE IT CLEAR [redacted] DIDN'T THINK I HAD WHAT IT TOOK TO BE QUEEN OF THE WAKANDAS."
--YOU'VE NEVER KILLED ANYTHING? PERHAPS NOT A PERSON, BUT AT LEAST LIVESTOCK? WE ARE A WARRIOR PEOPLE, MY DEAR.

BUT SERIOUSLY--THINKING ABOUT THIS? I KNOW I AM NOT YOUR "ONE TRUE LOVE"--AND YOU *KNOW* IT, TOO. I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU'RE HERE WHEN YOU SHOULD BE WORKING IT OUT WITH *HER*.
YOU'VE NEVER PLAYED IT SAFE IN YOUR LIFE, T'CHALLA. WHY START WITH THE BIGGEST DECISION YOU'LL EVER MAKE?
YOU'RE A GOOD FRIEND, MONICA LYNNE.

"CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT SILLY HOOCHIE RAN HIM OFF?"
MONICA LYNNE
ONE SUMMER DAY

WHICH MEANS HE'S SINGLE AND LOOKING FOR THE ONE. WHY ELSE WOULD HE BE AT A NIGHTCLUB? NOW HOW THE HELL IS HE GOING TO MEET A QUALITY WOMAN IN A PLACE LIKE THIS?
DIDN'T I MEET YOU AT A CLUB?
HA HA. VERY FUNNY.
OH, THERE YOU ARE.
ISN'T THIS THE JAM?
I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU FOR A HALF HOUR, SHURI.
TRACKING SKILLS SLIPPING ALREADY?
ALL THE CHEAP COLOGNE IN [redacted] THROWING ME OFF. LET'S GO.
ONE MORE RECORD! -SOB- ONE MORE RECORD THEN I'LL GO! I--
SHURI--A FIRST KILL CAN BE VERY UPSETTING. BUT YOU CAN'T LET HIM WIN AFTER YOU BEAT HIM!
I KEEP SEEING HIM, IN TWO PIECES...AND HIS BLOOD DRIPPING OFF THE SWORD ALL OVER ME...
SSSSSHHHH... LET'S GO.

AT LEAST I KNOW YOU CAN HANDLE YOURSELF IN A FIGHT.
I KNEW THAT'S ALL YOU CARE ABOUT...
EXCUSE ME... T'CHALLA, IS THAT YOU?
UH, YES... HAVE WE MET?
OH BOY, HERE WE GO...
OH YOU REMEMBER! LAST YEAR, AT THE THING?
LET HER PASS.
MMMMMMM, THAT'S MORE LIKE IT! YOUR GIRLS CERTAINLY TAKE THEIR JOB SERIOUSLY!
ARE YOU GETTING OUT OF HERE? BECAUSE I AM SOOOOO BORED--
THIS IS NOT HOW I WANT TO MEET MY IDOL.

T'CHALLA? HAVE YOU MET POOKIE? HE'S GOT THE NUMBER ONE ALBUM ON THE CHARTS RIGHT--
THINK YOU CAN CLOWN ME?
SMAK
YOU MUST NOT KNOW--
STOP.
GET TO WORK, YOU DUMB MUTHA--
NOW I'M REALLY MAD. I SEE WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN NEXT. I'M GOING TO END UP FIGHTING MY MAN.

WHACK
AKKKK!
SPLUNCH
CHUD
CRACK
WHACK
HEY! DON'T RUN! I NEED A PLAYMATE!
DAMN. HE HAS HIS WOMEN DO HIS LIGHT WORK.

HITTING WOMEN CAN BE DANGEROUS TO YOUR HEALTH.
ACK! LEMME GO, MAN!
WILL YOU LEAVE HER ALONE?
AH! YES! YES! I PROMISE!
TAKE HIM HOME.
HMMMPGH!
YOU AIN'T GONNA DO NOTHIN'? WHY DID I EVEN HIRE YOUR SUPER-POWERED BUTT?
I'M PROTECTING YOU RIGHT NOW. IT COULD BE A LOT WORSE. JUST CALM DOWN AND WALK AWAY.
MAN, I AIN'T GETTING PUNKED LIKE THIS. I SAID I WOULDN'T HURT HER--

--BUT I DIDN'T SAY I WOULDN'T KNOCK *YOUR* HAT OFF!
OOOWEE! THAT STINGS AT CLOSE RANGE!
OHMYGAWDYOU'REMY*HERO!*
HOW COME YOU DIDN'T DO NO FLY STUFF LIKE THAT WHEN I WAS GETTING MY BUTT KICKED IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DANCE FLOOR?

YOU'RE FIRED!
YEAH, LIKE I CARE.
UH, COULD YOU ESCORT ME HOME?
WHERE'S THE...KING?
GUESS I WASN'T HIS TYPE.
ON THE WAY HOME, SHE MADE HER MOVE.
I PASS, SHE'S FINE, BUT I ALREADY GOT A GOOD WOMAN AT HOME. NAME'S JESSICA.
THE NIGHT HAS ME A LITTLE RATTLED. NOT SCARED, BUT IN CASE TROUBLE IS FOLLOWING ME, I DON'T WANT TO BRING IT HOME.
SO I STOP AT ONE OF MY SAFE-HOUSES UPTOWN.

AND GUESS WHO'S THERE WAITING ON ME?
I DON'T KNOW HOW HE DID IT, BUT I DON'T EVEN QUESTION IT. HIS GAME IS SUPPOSED TO BE THAT TIGHT.
SOMETHING TO DRINK?
NO THANKS.
SURPRISED YOU'RE NOT WITH THAT FINE LADY.
I COULD SAY THE SAME. TO WALK AWAY FROM A WOMAN THAT BEAUTIFUL TAKES A LOT OF DISCIPLINE.
SO WHY ARE YOU HERE?
I'M SORRY YOU LOST YOUR JOB.
I'M NOT.
I'M HERE TO OFFER YOU A NEW ONE.
INTERESTED?
INTERESTED?